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Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 DHA-02 AID-05 ITFE-05 HEW-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 OMB-01 INSE-00

VO-03 SCA-01 AGR-05 EB-07 /106 W
---------- 020899
R 221118Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8186
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI
AMCONSUL UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 14809

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, LA, TH
SUBJ: REFUGEE SITUATION IN THAILAND

1. THE DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS (SWISS) INVITED THE AMBASSADORS OR CHARGES OF SWEDEN, DENMARK, FRANCE, ITALY, GERMANY, NETHERLANDS, CANADA, AUSTRIA AND USA TO A MEETING TODAY ON THE SUBJECT OF THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN THAILAND. THE DEAN SAID HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH FONMIN CHATCHAI AFTER THE LATTER'S RETURN FROM GENEVA AND HE REPORTED THAT CHATCHAI HAD HELD VERY SATISFACTORY MEETINGS WITH THE UNHCR AND ICRC IN GENEVA AT WHICH IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT BOTH ORGANIZATIONS COULD PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN PROVIDING TEMPORARY RELIEF FOR REFUGEES OR DISPLACED PERSONS IN THAILAND. THE DEAN SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED HAD AN INTEREST IN REFUGEE AFFAIRS AND THAT A DISCUSSION OF THE PLIGHT OF REFUGEES IN THIS COUNTRY MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO ALL CONCERNED.

2. IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION WHICH FOLLOWED, A CONSENSUS EMERGED ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:
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A. THAT THE SITUATION IN THE CAMPS WAS SUFFICIENTLY GRAVE AS TO WARRANT A SERIOUS EFFORT TO SUPPLEMENT THE THAI PROGRAM. ALL PRESENT AGREED THAT THE PRESENT RATION WAS INADEQUATE AND HEALTH CARE WAS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT.

B. THAT THAI SENSITIVITIES WERE SUCH THAT INTER-NATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE LONG RUN WOULD HAVE TO BE HANDLED THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL BODY.

C. THAT THE PRESENT POLICY AND STAFF OF THE UNHCR WERE TOTALLY INADEQUATE TO THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM. THE UNHCR APPEARS TO BE ABSORBED IN ARRANG-ING THE REPATRIATION OF A HANDFUL OF REFUGEES BUT HAS TAKEN NO INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF IN-CAMP AND OUT-OF-CAMP REFUGEES. THE GROUP WAS REGALED BY ANECDOTES REGARDING THE LAZINESS AND INCOMPETENCE OF MR. USAMAH KADRY, THE PRESENT UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE.

D. THAT THE REPORTED PROPOSAL OF THE UNHCR TO CONDUCT SURVEYS IN THE NEAR FUTURE WAS AN ABSOLUTE WASTE OF TIME AS ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION WAS ALREADY AVAILABLE AND THAT THE UNHCR'S FIRST STEP SHOULD BE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOOD SUPPLEMENTS AND MEDICAL CARE. SOME AMBASSADORS DECRIED THE LIKELI-HOOD OF THE UNHCR BEING CAPABLE OF DOING AN EFFECTIVE JOB AND TENDED TO URGE THAT THE ICRC BE GIVEN THE MANDATE. ALTHOUGH FOOD IS NOT NORMALLY HANDLED BY THE ICRC, DRIED MILK AND OTHER FOOD SUPPLEMENTS COULD BE DELIVERED ON "MEDICAL" GROUNDS.

F. THAT CURRENT AND FORESEEABLE CONDITIONS IN THE CAMPS MADE IT DESIRABLE FOR A PROGRAM TO BE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT DELAY. THE FLEXIBILITY AND INITIATIVE OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS WERE STRESSED AND SOME SUGGESTED THAT AN IMMEDIATE SHORT RANGE PROGRAM BE UNDERTAKEN WITH THE HELP OF VOLAGS WHILE THE UNHCR OR THE ICRC WAS PULLING ITSELF TOGETHER.

3. ALL THE AMBASSADORS PRESENT HAD DIFFERENT STATISTICS REGARDING THE REFUGEE SITUATION AND THEY ASKED THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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U.S. COORDINATE FACTS ON THE SITUATION. I AGREED THAT WE WOULD CIRCULATE OUR STATISTICS TO THE AMBASSADORS.

4. THE CANADIAN CHARGE NOTED THAT CANADA HAD ALREADY MADE A VERY SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNHCR AND HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS URGING OTTAWA TO ENJOIN UNHCR TO START SPENDING THIS MONEY ON RELIEF HERE.

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5. IT APPEARS PROBABLE THAT ALL THE AMBASSADORS
PRESENT WILL REPORT ON THIS MEETING TO THEIR GOVERN-
MENTS AND THAT VARIOUS DEMARCHES WILL BE MADE IN GENEVA
IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, POLICIES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO14809
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750252-0891
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750731/aaaabbpd.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ORM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2003 by IzenbeI0>; RELEASED <06 MAY 2003 by IzenbeI0>; APPROVED <07 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REFUGEE SITUATION IN THAILAND
TAGS: SREF, LA, TH, UNHCR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006